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Agenda item 3 (a)

LAND RESOURCES
DEFORESTATION

A non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and development of all types of forest

Proposal submitted by Ghana*

PREAMBLE

(a) The subject of forestry is related to the entire gamut of environmental and development issues including the right to development.

(b) Deliberation on forestry issues should be examined in a holistic and balanced manner within the overall context of environment and development, taking into consideration the multiple uses of forest, including traditional uses, and the likely economic and social stress when these uses are constrained or restricted.

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* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77.

(c) The UNCED process is the most appropriate forum for conclusive decision pertaining to global consensus on forests which should form the basis for all other negotiations involving forests.

PRINCIPLES/ELEMENTS

1. Principle 21 of the Stockholm Declaration - "States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction."

2. Forests include areas under permanent vegetative cover, ecosystems and human settlements and the States have the inalienable right to utilize, manage and develop them in accordance with their development needs and national policies and legislation including the need to convert some of these areas for other uses in their overall socio-economic development based on rational land-use policies.

3. Efforts towards the greening of the world by all countries particularly in developed countries should be enhanced.

4. All types of forests play a major role in maintaining the ecological balance at local, national, regional and global levels.

5. All types of forests perform a wide range of social functions, including for forest dwellers, local communities and indigenous people who use and sustain forest resources and systems.

6. All types of forest play an important role in meeting the energy requirements particularly in developing countries.

7. The multiple roles must be balanced to ensure that forests continue to function in a sustainable manner.

8. Adequate conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests is closely related to the promotion of a supportive international economic climate conducive to sustained and environmentally sound development in all countries, which include, inter alia, change in the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption particularly in industrialized countries, and eradication of poverty and promotion of food security in developing countries.

9. Efforts should be undertaken towards the greening of the world by all countries particularly in developed countries through reforestation and afforestation.

10. The external indebtedness of developing countries, the phenomenon of net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries and the low commodity prices are major factors that reduce their capacity and ability to manage, conserve and develop their forest resources.

11. Developing countries should be compensated for their opportunity costs foregone and the comparatively higher cost entailed by increasing forest cover as well as sustainable management and conversation of their forest resources.

12. New and additional financial resources should be provided to developing countries through a global fund to enable them to sustainably manage, conserve and develop their forests' resources including afforestation, reforestation and combating, deforestation, forest and land degradation.

13. The transfer of environmentally sound technology to developing countries, including on concessional and preferential terms, should be promoted to enable developing countries to enhance their endogenous capacity, to enable them to better manage, conserve and develop their forest resources.

14. International cooperation in areas of scientific research and technological development applications in the field of sustainable forest management, conservation and development should be strengthened through effective modalities.

15. Removal of tariff barriers, the provision of better market access and better prices for higher value-added forest products and their local processing should be encouraged to enable producer countries to better conserve and manage their renewable forest resources.

16. All forms of unilateral actions to restrict and/or ban the use of timber and other forest products should be removed as such actions are counter-productive towards long-term sustainable forest management.